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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002258

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PINS](#) [CVIS](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: RIOTS IN JOS ABATE

REF: A) ABUJA 2255

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

[11.](#) (U) SUMMARY: While rioting in Jos continued into a second straight day (Saturday), by mid-morning on Sunday, 9 September, AmCits and GON officials were reporting that order had been restored. A 1600 to 0700 curfew governs daily life until further notice, however. Embassy received word that the military forces were doing a conscientious job of confiscating illicit weapons, restoring order and protecting American lives and property. The number of Nigerians injured or killed at this time is unclear. At this time, wardens are re-assessing earlier AmCit requests for evacuation assistance. END SUMMARY.

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SATURDAY - CONFLICT CONTINUED
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[12.](#) (SBU) PolOff 8 September received calls from Terry Hammack, a missionary with the Society of International Missionaries in Jos, Plateau State, at 0700 and 1100. According to Hammack, who said he had traveled about the city on his motorcycle, a pall of smoke from riot fires was shrouding the city. Fires had continued through the night, and sounds of gunfire had resumed during the morning. Some injured Nigerians had begun arriving at the missionary hospital at his compound (Hammack was unable to indicate the number of injured). According to Hammack, Jos was "closing down." Meanwhile, Post began to hear second-hand that some AmCits resident in Jos wanted to leave.

[13.](#) (SBU) PolOff also spoke with Webe Boer, an Amcit and former OTI employee at 1300. Boer had heard that the curfew was round-the-clock. He believed the rioting had begun around the Kongo Mosque (vice the Central Mosque). Boer stated he had witnessed Christian vigilante groups entering and destroying Muslim houses in the Government Reserved Area (GRA) where he and Hammack live. Boer said he had heard word that people were also coming into Jos from surrounding villages to join the rioting. According to Boer, this type of conflict "had been brewing for about a year." He stated that he believed the prevalent attitude was that, after the burning of churches the previous day, "Christians were reminding Muslims that Jos is a Christian city." Boer noted that a nearby house belonging to the (Muslim) Governor of Bauchi State had been burned.

[14.](#) (SBU) Boer stated that he believed AmCits in Jos were safe, and that he had not heard of any attacks against missionary compounds. However, he feared a possible wave of reprisals against Christians from the Muslim community. Boer had not seen evidence of a police or military presence, but he had heard both forces were active in the city. Boer was hopeful that an impending rainstorm would quench the violence.

[15.](#) (SBU) Post One in Lagos notified Abuja Duty Officer at 1400 of a call from an Italian nun regarding the welfare of two American nuns. Duty Officer made contact with the American nuns, Sister Barbara and Sister Rice, who reported that a Mosque next to their compound (1 Utan Lane) had been burned to the ground. The Italian nun had believed their compound had been destroyed, but this was apparently incorrect. The American nuns reported that they were safe.

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SUNDAY - CALM RESTORED
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[16.](#) (SBU) PolOff spoke with Hammack again on 9 September. Hammack reported that by 1000 on 9 September, things had

"quieted down." Hammack said the police and military had taken over the streets. He had reports that the area worst hit during the rioting was Bukaru, 15 kilometers south of Jos. Hammack said that Bukaru had proportionally fewer Muslims than Jos, and therefore, the Muslims had less protection. He had heard that "people had been slaughtered in the streets." The Embassy has not been able to confirm this report.

17. (SBU) PolOff spoke with Boer again on 9 September. Boer stated he had been moving about the city with soldiers from the 3rd Armored Division. Boer stated that the soldiers were conscientiously checking vehicles and anyone looking suspicious, and had been confiscating weapons. He said the soldiers were being cheered everywhere they went, and said they had been doing "a very good job, including protecting Americans." Boer urged PolOff to pass this praise on to the General Officer, Commanding of the 3rd Armored Division. He also reported that he had heard from the other two American Fulbright scholars living at the University of Jos that they were safe.

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AMCIT WELFARE
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18. (U) Post had received reports early Sunday afternoon that up to 50 AmCits residing in Jos and the surrounding area might wish to be evacuated to Abuja. Post sent the following message on the warden network and followed up with telephone calls:

"There are Americans in Abuja who would welcome fellow citizens into their homes for a few days in Americans living in and around Jos would like to leave the area briefly. Please convey through the Warden Network numbers of individuals or families who might wish to accept this offer."

19. (U) By early Sunday evening, with curfew in effect and a heavy police and military presence on Jos streets, our AmCit contacts were reporting the city quiet and were no longer seeking immediate evacuation assistance. We will stay in touch with them through the night, as necessary. If required, Post can mobilize sufficient vehicles to evacuate 50 persons. The Nigerian Police have offered to support an evacuation effort, should we undertake one.

110. (U) Amcits in the Jos area report that ISPs serving the Jos community are either very slow or inaccessible. If U.S. relatives of Jos-based Amcits report being unable to reach family members by email, the Department may wish to pass along this information. Basic telephone service is still working in much of the city.

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CONTACT INFORMATION
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111. (U) There is no full-time consular officer assigned to Post. Lagos-based American Citizens Services Officer Sherry Sykes arrived in Abuja Sunday afternoon and will stay in the capital for at least two days, after which time the need for her presence will be reassessed. She can be reached at the residence of Wayne Hemmings and Denise Rollins (234-9-413-5740). Mr. Hemmings is Embassy Duty Officer until OOB on September 12, and he is carrying the Duty Officer mobile phone (234-90-802-237). The Mission Guard Force can be reached on 234-9-523-0916, -0960, -5857 or -2235 and can reach Embassy Officers by radio.
Andrews